This Monster Wants to Eat Me

4

Sai Naekawa

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CHAPTER 14

UGH! WORST DAY EVER!!

THE WEATHER REPORT DIDN'T CALL FOR ANY RAIN TODAY!

I THINK WATER GOT IN MY PHONE!

COULD I GET A TOWEL OVER HERE?

3

HEY, SHIORI-SAN.

ZAAAA (FSSH)

WE COULD TAKE SHELTER BY THAT SOUVENIR SHOP BACK THERE...

—...

CHAPTER
14

Warm Rain on Scars

ZAAAA (FSSH)

...I WILL.

DO WATCH YOUR STEP.

THE GROUND'S AWFULLY SLIPPERY.

NO...

...SEEMS LIKE WE'RE WALKING AWAY FROM THE BEACH?

ARE WE GOING BACK TO THE STATION?

I SIMPLY THOUGHT IT UNWISE TO REMAIN THERE.

...I DON'T SUPPOSE WE'D ENJOY DEALING WITH SOMETHING EVEN NASTIER THAN THE RAIN, NOW WOULD WE?

IT WAS SO VERY CROWDED WITH HUMANS, AND...

ZA

ZA

WHAT DO YOU MEA—

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA (FSSH)

ZA

—…

A HUMAN LIKE YOU...

PA (CLAP)

ぱ

!

NO, NO!

.....

...ISN'T MEANT TO BEHOLD SUCH THINGS.

.....

ARE THEY MON-STERS TOO?

THEM? HMM, WELL...

THEY'RE BETWEEN HUMANS AND MONSTERS, ONE MIGHT SAY.

BETWEEN ...?

NOT QUITE VENGEFUL GHOSTS NOR MONSTERS ...

...THEY EMERGE FROM THE WAVES TO LEVY THEIR LAMENTS TOWARD THE SHORE.

NO MORE THAN A CLAMOROUS NUISANCE, REALLY, BUT THEY CAN ACT LIKE POISON TO LIVING HUMANS.

ZA (FSSH) ZA

ZA

WHEN HUMANS MEET THEIR UNTIMELY DEATHS AT SEA...

...THEIR LINGERING REGRETS AND GRUDGES AMASS AND TAKE FORM.

PEOPLE WHO DIED...

...AT SEA...

DID YOU SEE YOUR FAMILY IN THERE?

GUI GUG

I TOLD YOU NOT TO LOOK, AND YET...

I'D BE HAPPY TO DRAG THEM ASHORE SO YOU CAN SAY HELLO.

IF YOU DO, LET ME KNOW.

.....NO.

...I WISH...

...THEY REALLY HAD BEEN IN THERE.

ZAA (FSSH)

ZAA

OH DEAR...

GYUUUU (WRING)

LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT IN HERE FOR THE SKY TO CLEAR.

IT'S REALLY COMING DOWN HARD, HUH...?

WHAT ROTTEN LUCK.

FURU (TREMBLE)

.....

ARE YOU COLD?

!

.....
NO.

I'M FINE.

ZAAAA (FSSH)

.....

.....

ZUI (SCOOT)

HUH?

THOUGHT SO.

BIKU (FLINCH)

YOU'RE SOAKED THROUGH.

YOU'LL CATCH A COLD—

...NO.

PERHAPS YOU...

...OUGHT TO REMOVE YOUR COAT?

.....

YOU ARE CLEARLY NOT FINE...

I'M FINE...

REALLY... I'M OKAY. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

HITA (FREEZE)

AH, SEE?

YOU'RE CHILLED TO THE BONE, KEEPING THIS ON—

YOU MAY BE UNCONCERNED FOR YOUR WELL-BEING, BUT IT'S OF GREAT CONCERN TO ME...

...!

SAA (PALE)

BA (BAM)

I SAID I'M FINE.....!

ZU (SLIP)

ZAAAA (FSSH)

I'M SORRY...

.....

THOSE SCARS...

...THAT YOU HAD TO SEE THIS GROTESQUE SIDE OF ME.

THE PARTS I'M HIDING ARE EVEN WORSE.

.....

I WAS HOPING YOU'D NEVER GET A GLIMPSE, SHIORI-SAN.

AND...THIS ISN'T EVEN ALL OF IT.

—...

.....LOST YOUR APPETITE, I BET?

ZAAAA (FSSH)

WHY WOULD I?

HINAKO.

FOR MY PART...

ALL THAT MATTERS ...

...IS THAT YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE.

...WHETHER YOUR EXTERIOR IS A THING OF BEAUTY OR OF HORROR...

...MATTERS NOT.

THAT ALONE...

...IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME.

EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

KOTSUN (FWOMP)

HAAH...

I HOPE THIS RAIN LETS UP SOON.

SHE'S SO CLOSE ...

BEFORE YOU FREEZE TO DEATH, THAT IS.

IT'S THE INSIDE OF THE MEAT THAT MATTERS!

SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT APPEAR-ANCES!

I WOULD TAKE FAR GREATER ISSUE WITH YOU CATCHING COLD OUT HERE AND SPOILING YOUR FLAVOR!

PA (BEAM)

.....YET...

...THERE ARE WORSE THINGS...

THE TOUCH OF HER HAND AND BODY...

...IS EVEN COLDER THAN I AM.

YET IT FEELS...

IT SURE IS WARM NOW THAT THE SUN IS SHINING AGAIN.

AH.

I WANNA SWIM!

MORE THAN WARM...

...IT'S GETTING HOT OUT HERE...

STILL BETTER THAN THE RAIN'S CHILL, NO?

たたTA
たたTAAA

HUH ...?

PARDON ME, HINAKO.

I'LL JUST BE A MOMENT.

TA (TMP)

BYUN (ZOOM)

SO FAST...

?

...YOU CAN CONSIDER THIS AN APOLOGY FOR TODAY.

FOR WHAT?

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

ガサゴソ

GASA (RUSTLE)

WHAT'D YOU BUY?

WELL...

GASA

ガサ…

FUWA (FWUFF)

ふわ

ALSO...

...

YOUR COAT IS STILL WET, NO?

...FAILED TO PROVIDE THE PROMISED DELIGHTFUL DAY.

FOR THAT, I AM SORRY.

...I DRAGGED YOU THIS FAR FROM HOME BY TRAIN, BUT...

GYU (CLENCH)

NO MATTER THE ERA, I'M AFRAID I'M NO MATCH FOR THE WEATHER.

SHOBON (GLOOM)

しょぼん…

HEY, SHIORI-SAN.

ZAZAN (FSSH)

I GUESS...

...YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO BRING ME BACK HERE AT SOME POINT, HUH?

OF COURSE.
IT'D BE MY PLEASURE.

MY REFERENCES FOR THE HANDS POPPING OUT OF THE SEA WERE PHOTOS OF MY OWN HANDS.

This Monster Wants to Eat Me

CHAPTER 15

HERE, MIKO-CHAN.

A SOUVENIR FROM MY OUTING THE OTHER DAY.

YOU SHOULD COME WITH US NEXT TIME.

.....

WHOA! FOR ME!? THANKS! AHH, THE PACKAGING IS TOO CUTE!!

THERE WERE TONS OF LITTLE SHOPS, JUST LIKE YOU SAID. I HAD A BLAST.

...AH! SPEAKING OF GOING SOMEWHERE WITH YOU...

OF COURSE! I'D GO TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, AS LONG AS IT'S WITH YOU!

I'M SURE WE COULD HAVE FUN AT THE BEACH, THE MOUNTAINS, THE JUNGLE— WHEREVER!

HISHI (GLOMP)

I'LL SKIP THE JUNGLE, THANKS...

THE THING IS...

...I'VE GOT A SERIOUS FAVOR TO ASK...

.....?

CHAPTER
15
WHERE THE HEART LIES

THE BASKETBALL CLUB'S TRAINING CAMP?

THAT'S RIGHT— YOU'RE IN A BUNCH OF TEAMS AND CLUBS, AREN'T YOU?

MOSTLY AS A PINCH HITTER, THOUGH. I DON'T ATTEND EVERY EVENT FOR ALL OF THEM.

?

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

WELL...

...THE THING IS, THE TEAM MANAGERS .....

BUT I'VE BEEN ROPED INTO THEIR WEEKEND TRAINING CAMP, AND...

SO...

...THE CLUB ADVISER WAS ASKING AROUND TO FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO GO IN THEIR PLACE.

I SEE...

THERE'S A MEMORIAL SERVICE AT MY GRANDMA'S PLACE THIS WEEKEND...

BOTH OF THEM HAVE OTHER STUFF GOING ON, SO THEY CAN'T BE THERE.

SORRY...

SORRY!

MY COUSIN IS GETTING MARRIED!!

WELL?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT JOINING ME ON THIS THING?

NO HARD WORK INVOLVED— I PROMISE!

HMM...

HYOKO CPOP

MY, MY, YOU TWO SEEM TO BE HAVING A GRAND OLD TIME WITHOUT ME!

UGH... RIGHT ON CUE.....

NEVER MIND ME.

SHOULDN'T YOU BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT TRAVELING AWAY FROM HOME FOR THIS DUTY?

MU (MRK)

I WONDER WHAT THIS "TRAINING CAMP" IS LIKE? IT SOUNDS TERRIBLY EXCITING!

WHY'RE YOU ASSUMING THAT YOU'RE ALSO INVITED?

ドキ――ッ
DOKIII (BADMP)
HUH !?
WOULD IT BE A PROBLEM IF IT WAS FARTHER AWAY?
HMPH!
NAH, THE LOCATION'S NOT EVEN THAT FAR FROM TOWN. I'LL BE A-OKAY!
.....?
A-A PROBLEM? NAH...I JUST GET A LITTLE HOMESICK, IS ALL!
HOME-SICK?
もどどろろ
I REALLY LOVE MY HOME TURF!!
OH? WHAT A SHAME.
HUH!?

SFX: SHIDORO (STAMMER) MODORO (MUTTER)

SO ...?
WHAT D'YOU SAY?
WILL YOU... COME TO THIS TRAINING CAMP WITH ME, HINAKO?
.....

?

!!!

CHIRA (GLANCE)

.....

I GUESS SO...

FOR REAL!?

AWESOME! THEN ALL THREE OF—

AS LONG AS ALL THREE OF US GO...

NOTHING HAPPENED, REALLY...

MUKAAA (RAGE)

EVEN IF SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED, HINAKO HAS NO OBLIGATION TO INFORM YOU.

...HUH? THREE? DID SOMETHING GO DOWN WITH THAT ONE OVER THERE?

GAAAAAH!! I KNEW LETTING YOU LEAVE TOWN WITH HINAKO WAS A BAD IDEA!!

AAARGH!

HERE WE HAVE EXHIBIT A OF "IT'S NO USE CRYING OVER SPILT MILK."

SHUT IT!!

NOT REALLY.....

GUGIGI (GRIND)
ぐぎぎ…

MIKO-CHAN.

THE TRUE POWER OF AN EIGHT CM HEIGHT GAP...!

I'M... LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS TRAINING CAMP.

NIKOOO (SMILE)

UGH...

.....ME TOO.

THAT WEEK-END—

MIIIN (BUZZ)

MIIIN

OKAY, EVERYONE! HUDDLE UP.

HINAKO!

SUCH A LARGE FACILITY...

ONCE YOU DROP YOUR THINGS OFF, IT'S STRAIGHT TO PRACTICE.

TA (TMP) TA

GOT IT...

THE OWNER'S IN THE CAFETERIA, SO YOU TWO SHOULD HEAD OVER THERE.

OKAAY!

NO FUNNY BUSINESS WITH HINAKO, 'KAY?

SCURRY OFF TO PRACTICE, NOW.

THANKS!

GOOD LUCK WITH PRACTICE, MIKO-CHAN.

THE TEACHER TOLD ME...

...YOU TWO ARE FILLING IN FOR THE MANAGERS. HOW NICE!

IS YOUR ARM ALL RIGHT, MA'AM?

THIS OLD THING? IT'S FINE!

JUST TOOK A TUMBLE DOWN THE STAIRS.

EMBAR-RASSING AS IT IS TO ADMIT!

RIGHT ...

GACHA (KACHAK)

I'VE GOT A PART-TIMER HERE TO HELP OUT WITH THE TOUGH STUFF.

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT ME!

PIKU (JOLT)

I'M AYAME CHIBA.

DON'T HESITATE TO COME TO ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

NIKO (SMILE)

...AYAME-SAN?

HOW ABOUT A QUICK TOUR AND EXPLANATION OF THE FACILITIES?

OKAY.

PEKO (BOW)

I-I'M HINAKO YAO-TOSE.

NICE TO MEET YOU...

SAME TO YOU.

.....?

SHIORI-SAN?

PA (BEAM)

WHAT'S WRONG ...?

AH, NOTH-ING!

NOT A SINGLE THING IS WRONG.

?

OKAY...

WELL, SHALL WE?

LOUDER! LET ME HEAR YOU!

WE'RE NOT DONE HERE YET!

NICE SHOT!

THIS ISN'T EVEN THEIR PROFESSION...

...YET THEY HAVE SUCH TIGHT-KNIT BONDS.

HEY. YOU.

GO FOR IT!

HERE TO PICK OUT YOUR NEXT HUMAN SNACK? WELL, DON'T.

HMP.H!

OH?

I! EARNED! THIS BREAK!!!!

ARE YOU SLACKING OFF ALREADY?

AH-HA-HA! AS IF!

AND YOU?

YOU'D BETTER NOT HAVE LEFT HINAKO TO DO ALL THE WORK ON HER OWN.

HEH HEH HEH...

PARDON MY ASSUMP-TION.

WORKING HARD, THEN.

I DIDN'T TRULY MEAN IT...

SHE'S HELPING ONE OF THE EMPLOYEES WITH THE COOKING.

HMPH...

YOU STEPPED UP AND GOT TO WORK? SHOCK-ING.

HEAVE-HO!

I'M MORE OF AN EATER THAN A CHEF, SO...

...I WAS TASKED WITH PREPARING THE BEDDING INSTEAD.

OH MY! SO STRONG!

MIIIN

A BRUTISH, SUSPICIOUS MONSTER FROM SOME UNKNOWN CORNER OF THE DEPTHS.

MIIIN

MIIIN

NOW, NOW.

WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?

MIIIN (BUZZ)

ALL I'M SAYING IS...

THAT'S SLANDER, YOU KNOW? SLANDER.

YOU CERTAINLY HAVE A WAY WITH WORDS.

...I STILL DON'T GET WHY HINAKO'S SO WILLING TO LET HER GUARD DOWN...

...AROUND SOMETHING LIKE YOU.

ZAAA (WHOOOSH)

...NO, I IMAGINE NOT.

.....

BECAUSE IF YOU DID UNDER-STAND...

AM I WRONG?

...YOU COULD NO LONGER REMAIN HER FRIEND, I DARESAY.

YOU ARE...

...OVERLY AND TACTLESSLY FRANK.

...YOU WORK TO KEEP THAT VERY THING FROM HER.

KNOWING WHAT IT IS SHE SEEKS...

...IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU'LL NEVER GLIMPSE WHAT TRULY LIES IN HINAKO'S HEART.

AND BECAUSE YOU MAKE NO EFFORT TO CONCEAL THAT FACT...

LYING FOR OUR OWN SELFISH ENDS COMES AS EASILY AS BREATHING FOR US MONSTERS.

TO DECEIVE, MANIPULATE, AND CONSPIRE AGAINST HUMANS— SUCH IS OUR NATURE.

.....

YOU PUT ON A STIRRING HUMAN ACT, HOPING TO BE ACCEPTED BY THEM—

HOWEVER, I'M AFRAID THE WORLD ISN'T SO ACCOMMO-DATING.

OH MY!

LET US DISAGREE TO AGREE!

CHECK A PHRASE BOOK, PAL.

THAT'S ALL WRONG.

HAAH...

.....YOU AND I...

...WILL NEVER SEE EYE TO EYE.

HUH?

YOU BEING SARCAS-TIC?

THAT BEING SAID, YOUR DEDICATION TO EMULATING HUMANS IS ACTUALLY A POINT IN YOUR FAVOR.

YOUR FERVENT DESIRE IS THE VERY OPPOSITE OF HINAKO'S, YET...

...YOU REFUSE TO FORSAKE HER. YOU MANAGE TO REMAIN BY HER SIDE.

NO... I'M QUITE SERIOUS.

—…

I DON'T ……

AH!

THERE Y'ARE, OUMI-SAN!

…I'M ENVIOUS, TRULY.

YOU'RE A HUGE HELP!

THANKS A MILLION.

HOW ABOUT WE GO CHECK ON THE GALS IN THE CAFETERIA?

OKAY!

SORRY TO MAKE YOU HAUL ALL THOSE FUTONS ON YOUR OWN.

DID YOU MANAGE?

YES, IT WAS NO PROBLEM AT ALL.

.....

OH, I'VE GOT SOME CHILLED KIWIS. WANT ONE?

DO I EVER!

BYE, THEN, MIKO.

PRACTICE HARD.

ZAAA (WHOOOSH)

...I DON'T GOTTA HEAR IT FROM YOU.

ALL THIS TIME, OF COURSE I'VE KNOWN...

...WHAT SHE'S REALLY AFTER, DEEP DOWN.

MIIIN (BUZZ)

MIIIN

GYU (CLENCH)

I KNOW I CAN NEVER...

GO FOR IT!

ONE MORE TIME!

...GRANT HER WISH OR FULFILL HER DESIRE.

...WHAT ABOUT YOU, HUH?

BUT...

YOU CLAIM WE MONSTERS ARE ALL SELFISH LIARS.

AREN'T YOUR SWEET NOTHINGS...

...EXACTLY WHAT SHE WANTS TO HEAR...?

WRAPPED THE
GIFT HERSELF

This Monster Wants to Eat Me

CHAPTER
16
A KIND ONE

THERE WE GO...

GYU (CINCH)

ギュ

ゃっ

THANK YOU, REALLY.

IT'S SUCH A HELP TO HAVE SOMEONE STRONG.

DID YOU SAY THAT GARBAGE IS PLACED BEHIND THE GYM?

YES.

PLEASE DUMP THAT IN THE BIG PLASTIC BIN MARKED "KITCHEN WASTE."

WILL DO.

NOW, THEN...

...SHOULD WE FINISH UP THE REST OF THE DISHES?

.....?

AH!

HINAKO-CHAN?

HINAKO

THE COOKIES ARE OUT OF THE OVEN, SO...

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

?

...NOTHING'S WRONG.

...NO.

OH...

C'MON.

LET'S WRAP THIS UP NICE AND QUICK.

GACHA (CLINK)

GACHA

YOUR COOKING EXPERTISE WAS A REAL HELP TOO, HINAKO-CHAN.

OH... YES.

MY FRIEND TAUGHT ME...

DO YOU COOK MUCH AT HOME?

OH?
YOU MEAN
SHIORI-
CHAN?

YOU
TWO SEEM
AWFULLY
CLOSE.

...NO.
NOT
HER.

"FRIEND"
...

AH,
I SEE.

NOT
SHIORI-
SAN...

ANOTHER
FRIEND
TAUGHT ME
HOW TO
COOK.

YOU MEAN ...

...ME AND SHIORI-SAN...?

ZAAA (FSSH)

YOU GET ALONG SO WELL, I JUST ASSUMED...

?

WELL, YES.

YOU ARE FRIENDS, AREN'T YOU?

THAT'S THE IMPRESSION YOU GET?

SHIORI-SAN AND I...

IT'S FINE...

UNLESS IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT? I HOPE I DIDN'T STEP ON ANY TOES!

AH!

...ARE ONLY IN THIS TO FULFILL EACH OTHER'S DESIRES.

NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.

SHE'S HARDLY SO KIND—

UNLIKE MIKO-CHAN, SHE'S NOT THE TYPE TO BECOME MY FRIEND.

NONSENSE. I'M ON A BREAK.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO STAY HYDRATED, AFTER ALL.

LOOK WHO'S SLACKING NOW.

...HM?

LOOK OVER THERE...

I WOULDN'T MIND IF YOU DRIED UP AND SHRIVELED AWAY...

TCH!

HINAKO SEEMS TO BE GETTING WEIRDLY CLOSE WITH THAT HUMAN.

I THOUGHT SO AT LUNCH TOO.

SURELY YOU'RE PROJECTING.

GUESS SHE'S MOVED ON FROM YOU, HUH?

THAT HUMAN...

...SHE RESEMBLES HINAKO IN A WAY.

I'M NOT SEEING SO MUCH HINAKO, BUT MORE HINAKO'S MO—

Y'THINK SO?

NO...I DON'T MEAN APPEARANCE-WISE.

AND JUST WHEN HINAKO WAS NEARLY RID OF THAT SCENT HERSELF...

SHE GIVES OFF AN UNPLEASANT ODOR.

LICKING EACH OTHER'S WOUNDS, I SUPPOSE?

AS LONG AS IT ISN'T ANYTHING MORE UNTOWARD THAN THAT.

SORRY FOR THE WAIT! THE BATH'S FREE NOW.

OKAY!

OH!

NICE HAIR TIE, MIKO!

WHERE'D YOU BUY IT?

HMM?

YES, I'M AWARE.

FROM HINAKO!! JUST FOR ME!!

WOULD YOU MIND NOT CROWDING ME?

OH, THIS? IT'S A SOUVENIR HINAKO GOT ME!

OOH!

...HINAKO-CHAN!

WHO ELSE STILL NEEDS TO BATHE?

UMM... THERE'S ME, AND AKO...

...AND FUYUKA, YUU-CHAN, OUMI-SAN, AND...

I'M READY FOR A BATH.

UH.....

WANNA JOIN US? WE'RE ABOUT TO HEAD OVER.

YOU HAVEN'T GONE YET, RIGHT, HINAKO?

...!

ERM...

I.....

THANKS, BUT NO!

WE STILL HAVE SOME OF OUR MANAGERIAL DUTIES LEFT, SO WE'LL BATHE LATER!

UP YOU GO! WE HAVE WORK TO ATTEND TO.

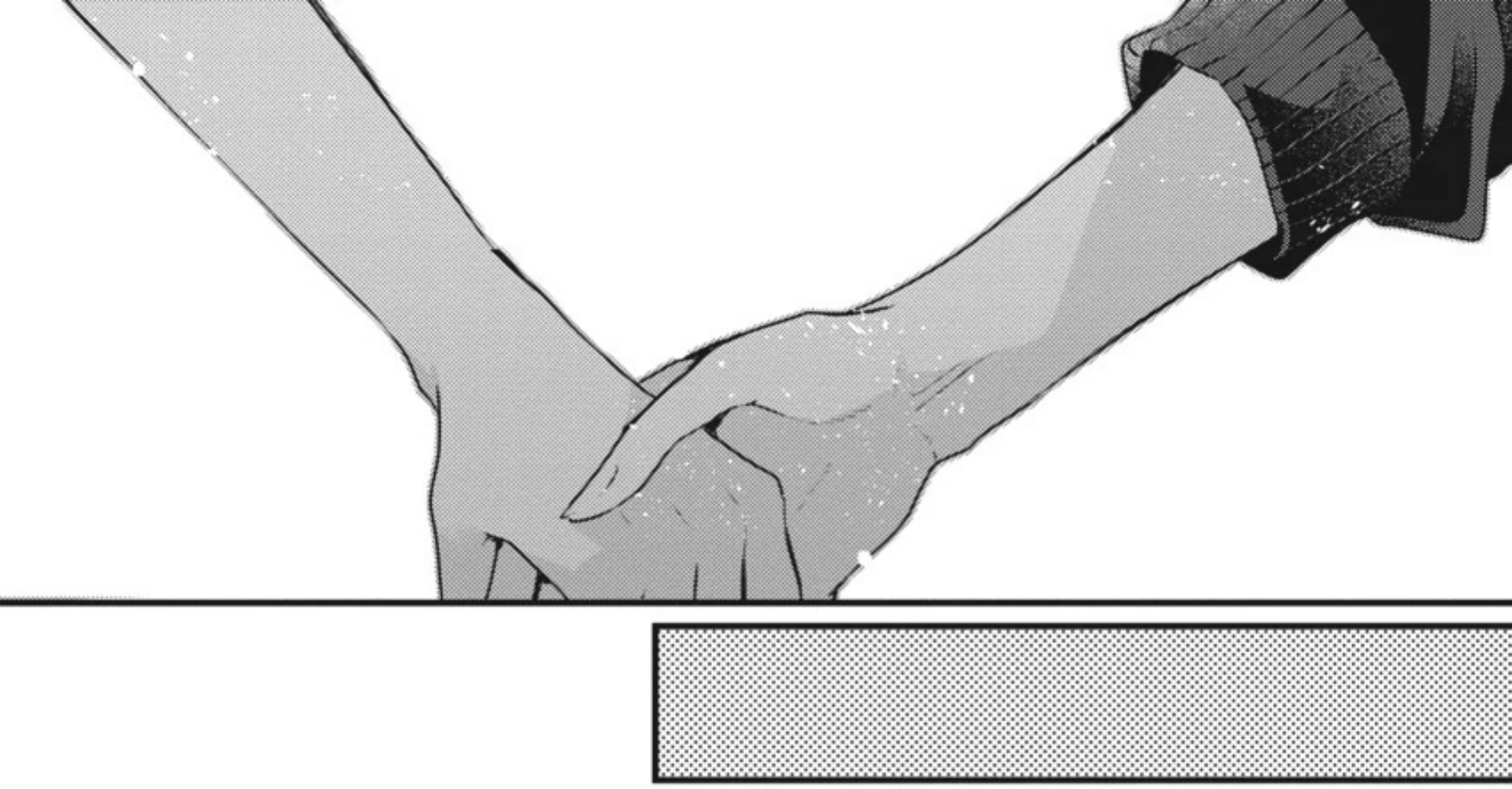
R-RIGHT...

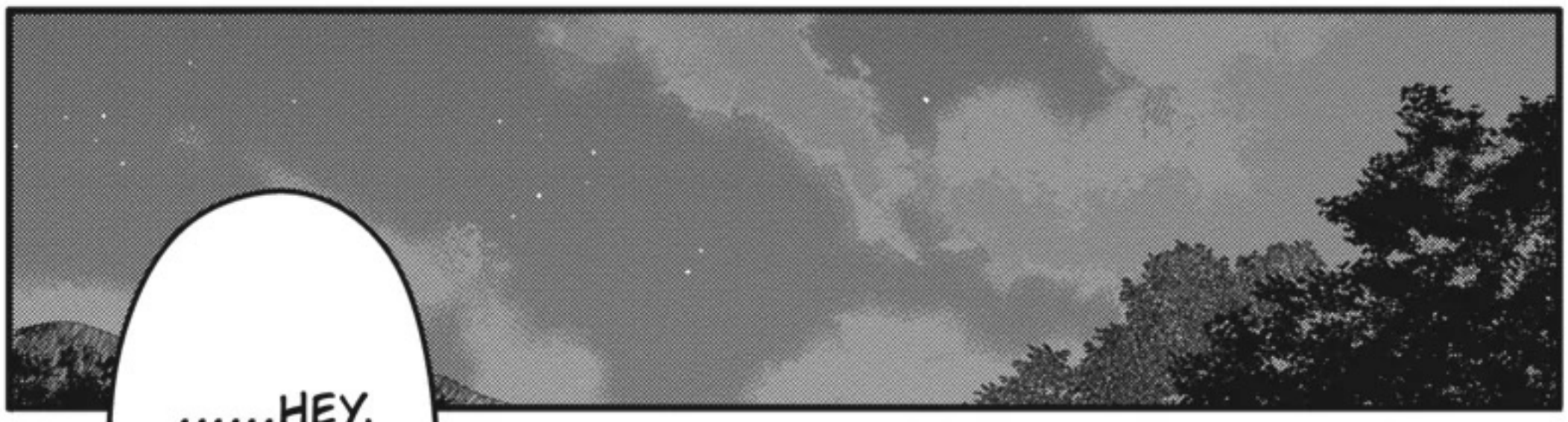
OH, OKAY! WE'LL JUST GO AHEAD, THEN.

BY ALL MEANS!

.....

.....





.....HEY, SHIORI-SAN.

HMM?

THESE "MANAGERIAL DUTIES"... WHAT WERE WE ASKED TO DO, EXACTLY?

HERE YOU ARE.

OH, RIGHT. OUR DUTIES... THOSE TASKS...

TEA

OH, THANKS...

HOW CARE-LESS OF ME.

HUH, I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN!

.....

KOKU (GULP)

SHIORI-SAN...

...WHY ARE YOU SO KIND TO ME?

GOOD-
NESS.

ISN'T IT
OBVIOUS?

PURELY FOR MY OWN SAKE.

KUI (TIP) い、っ

NOTHING THAT I BESTOW UPON YOU...

...OR PROVIDE FOR YOU...

...IS FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT.

EVERYTHING I DO, I DO FOR MYSELF.

...I'M A HUMAN...

GYU (SQUEEZE)

.....

...AND YOU'RE A MONSTER.

WE'VE FOISTED OUR OWN DESIRES ON EACH OTHER. THAT'S THE EXTENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.

YET...

...MIKO-CHAN MANAGED TO BECOME MY FRIEND, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S ALSO A MONSTER.

.....YOU AND I—

CAN WE NEVER BE FRIENDS?

GARAN (CLATTER)

...TO BE ALL CHUMMY WITH YOU, THE WAY THAT KITSUNE IS?

YOU WANT ME...

HYOI (YANK)

NAKAMOTO RECREATION CENTER

I'M SORRY TO SAY...

の分別に
お願いします。
PLEASE SORT YOUR
RECYCLING.

PLASTIC

...THAT WILL NEVER BE POSSIBLE.

AT LAST, YOU HAVE A REMARKABLY HUMAN LOOK ON YOUR FACE.

NOW, THEN...

THAT'S FOR THE BEST.

...I'LL GO KILL TIME SOMEWHERE MORE FITTING.

ONCE THOSE OTHER HUMANS ARE DONE, YOU CAN BATHE YOURSELF IN PRIVATE.

...SHIORI-SA—

.....

KOTSU (CLACK)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALL ALONE OUT HERE? AT THIS HOUR?

KOTSU

AH...

IT'S PERFECT TIMING, THOUGH.

KOTSU

OH?

COULD I BORROW YOU FOR A MOMENT?

AHH!
お茶
TEA
CANS
I HADN'T FINISHED MY DRINK...
しょぼ…
SHOBO (GLOOM)
DON'T TOSS PARTIALLY FULL CONTAINERS!

PAJAMA MODE

MYSTERY HAIR-STYLE

PAJA...MAS? OH, YOU MEAN NIGHTCLOTHES.

WE'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR IN THE TRAINING-CAMP ARC WITHOUT EVER SEEING HINAKO'S PAJAMAS, SO... CARDIGAN + MATCHING TOP AND BOTTOM PAJAMA SET (LONG-SLEEVED). SHE OPTS FOR SHORT SLEEVES AT HOME, SINCE NOBODY'S THERE TO SEE IT.

THIS WAS THE PLAN.

THE TWO OF US...

NOTHING I DO IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

EVERYTHING I DO, I DO FOR MYSELF.

...WILL NEVER BE FRIENDS.

FRIED CHICKEN

STRAW-BERRY

MELON

SODA

EACH

CHAPTER 17

HINAKO-CHAN?

YOU'RE LOOKING AWFULLY DOWN...

DID YOU HAVE AN ARGUMENT WITH YOUR FRIEND?

...

GYU (CLENCH)

NO...

CHAPTER
17

True Nature's Hidden Side

SIGN: STAFF ONLY

WE KEEP BUMPING INTO EACH OTHER TODAY, DON'T WE?

SHE'S MUCH MORE AT EASE BATHING ALONE.

.....

I'M NOT HERE LOOKING FOR YOU, PAL.

WHERE'S HINAKO?

IN THE BATH, I BELIEVE.

...
HAAH.
COULD YOU BE ANY MORE OBNOX-IOUS?
...
AND?
WHAT OF IT?
...YOU KNOW ABOUT HER SCARS, SO...
...YOU DRAGGED HER AWAY FROM THAT AWKWARD SITCH, YEAH?

.....

...HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?

ABOUT HER SCARS, I MEAN.

AH!

HOLD ON, DID YOU...? BEHIND MY BACK...!?

STRIP DOWN

JUST A TASTE! A QUICK SAMPLE! ♪

ACK!

*IMAGINED

AH HA HA!

NO, NO, NOTHING OF THE SORT.

IT WAS JUST BY CHANCE, REALLY.

OF COURSE I DIDN'T FORCE HER TO REVEAL WHAT SHE'S BEEN HIDING...

...NOR DID SHE SHOW ME OF HER OWN ACCORD.

.....

ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY, THOSE PARTICULAR WORRIES OF YOURS ARE UNFOUNDED.

...BUT GIVEN THOSE SCARS...

...IT MUST HAVE BEEN A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.

DO YOU TRULY THINK ME SO INSENSITIVE? SO CALLOUS?

THERE'S A PICTURE OF YOU NEXT TO "CALLOUS" IN THE DICTIONARY...

...I SURE HOPE YOU DIDN'T SAY THAT TO HER.

...SHE WAS SO BADLY INJURED, IT'S A WONDER SHE SURVIVED AT ALL.

...

...I'M GLAD...

...SHE MADE IT, EVEN IF SHE WAS THE LONE SURVIVOR.

JI (ZZT) =''/=''/JI ...

BUT...

...SEEING HOW SHE IS NOW, AT TIMES I WONDER...

...BETWEEN DYING ALONG WITH HER FAMILY THAT DAY...

...AND SURVIVING AND HAVING TO SUFFER ALONE—

WHICH OUTCOME WOULD'VE REALLY BEEN MORE FORTUNATE FOR HER?

THERE WE GO.

THANKS FOR HELPING OUT.

I REALLY APPRECIATE IT, HINAKO-CHAN.

I TOTALLY FORGOT TO PREP THE INGREDIENTS FOR TOMORROW MORNING'S MISO SOUP...

IF SO, I CAN LEAVE THEM OUT.

AS THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, I MEAN.

ARE THERE ANY VEGGIES YOU'RE NOT A FAN OF?

POTATOES

HUH ...?

...MOM.

...!

AH!

M...OM?

OH...I...!
SORRY...

OF COURSE
YOU'RE NOT
A MOM...
YOU'RE SO
YOUNG...

...NO NEED TO BE SORRY.
I MAY LOOK YOUNG, BUT I WAS IN FACT A MOTHER ONCE.

WELL, A STEPMOTHER TO MY HUSBAND'S CHILD, SO NOT RELATED BY BLOOD.

...OH, I SEE...?

...THAT LITTLE ONE DIED FAR TOO YOUNG.....

CARROTS

.....

GATAN (CLANK)

!

GARA (CLATTER)

...

I'M REALLY SORRY... TO HAVE BROUGHT IT UP AT ALL...

TON (THUNK)

OH DEAR.

AN AX...?

HOW DANGER-OUS.

I'LL HAVE TO PUT THIS AWAY.

—HUH?

WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE GETTING HURT.

...HOW MUCH A CUT FROM A RUSTY AX HURTS?

WHERE'S HER VOICE COMING FROM...?

HINAKO-CHAN, DO YOU KNOW...

AYAME-SAN...

GUCHU (SHLURK)

!!

HEY... WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?

DA (DASH)

A MON-STER ...!?

I DIDN'T SENSE ITS PRESENCE AT ALL UNTIL JUST NOW...!

GARA (RATTLE)

WHOA !?

DON'T GO AROUND SLAMMING DOORS OPEN, OKAY?

UH... OUMI-SAN?

SHEESH, YOU SCARED US.

.....

YOU LOOK FREAKED OUT...

WHAT'S UP?

WHERE'S HINAKO?

HUH?

HINAKO-CHAN?

SHE'S NOT HERE.

I THOUGHT SHE WAS GONNA HIT THE BATH WITH YOU LATER.

...!

KURU (WHIRL)

WAIT!

HINAKO IS MINE TO PROTECT ...!

MIKO?

.....

IS THERE SOME KIND OF TROUBLE?

YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD TOO, MIKO.

HEAR ME WELL.

IN THE EVENT OF DANGER, I WILL NOT BE LOOKING OUT FOR ANYONE BESIDES HINAKO.

GIRI (CLENCH)

.....!

HEY, MIKO...

SHOULD I GO GET AN ADULT?

NAH!
WE'RE JUST ROUNDING EVERYONE UP FOR A PILLOW FIGHT!
PA (BEAM)
LET'S SPREAD THE WORD TO THE OTHER ROOMS SO WE CAN GET THIS BRAWL STARTED!
OH, THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE UP TO?
—...

HINAKO-CHAN...

...YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT...

...SPLIT, LIKE ME.

...LEST YOU END UP...

PILLOW FIGHT DIVERSION TACTIC

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Q: FAVORITE FOOD?

SWEET ROLLED OMELET. (MADE BY MOM)

SWEETS, NOVELTY FOODS. (FAVORITE IS RICE BALLS SEASONED WITH SALT)

DO YOU REALLY NEED TO ASK?

Q: LEAST FAVORITE FOOD?

SOUR THINGS. (SHE CAN EAT THEM, BUT SHE'D RATHER NOT)

SHE ONCE TRIED CILANTRO AND VOMITED IT UP.

HMM, WHO CAN SAY?

EH-HEH-HEH...

CHAPTER 18

HE!

HE-KA-!

KU-

DOSHA (THUMP)

KA-

ZURU (SLIP)

KU-

.....!!

ZA (TMP)

OH DEAR...

...!

GU (CACHE)

GI

GI

GI (CRACK)

ZA

ZA

YOU MUSTN'T RUN, NOW...

IT'S TOO RISKY WITH THAT POND AROUND HERE.

GOKIN (SNAP)

CAN'T HAVE YOU FALLING IN AND GETTING HURT, CAN WE?

CHAPTER 18

Within the Obscurity

RIII

RIII

RIII (CROAK)

RIII

...AYAME-SAN.

NITA
(GAPE)

HEH
HEH...

YOU WERE A MONSTER... ALL ALONG ...?

ALL ALONG? NOT EXACTLY.

TO BE MORE PRECISE, I TURNED INTO A MONSTER.

SOME UNFORTUNATE EVENTS MADE ME WHAT I AM NOW...

I WAS ONCE AN ORDINARY HUMAN JUST LIKE YOU, HINAKO-CHAN.

...WHICH IS WHY I HAVE NO TROUBLE BLENDING IN AND LIVING AMONG HUMANS.

UNLESS I OPEN THIS MOUTH OF MINE, NOBODY EVER KNOWS MY TRUE NATURE.

MAYBE I DO STINK LIKE A CORPSE, BUT STILL...

WELL...

HEH HEH...

JIRI (SHF)

.....

YOU KNOW...

...I DON'T TYPICALLY FEED ON HUMANS.

SINCE THERE ARE WANNABE LOCAL DEITIES AND MERMAIDS AND...

...ALL MANNER OF PESKY MONSTERS IN THE AREA, YOU KNOW...

BUT...

...WHEN A HUMAN WHO SMELLS SO SCRUMPTIOUS IS SET RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME...

...HOW CAN I HELP MY-SELF?

ZU
DA (DASH)
ZARI (SCOOT)
HEH HEH HEH...
YOU'VE GOT MOXIE.
.....!!
ZU (SLIDE)
GUN (YANK)
!
ZU

DON'T WORRY.

I'LL SPLIT THAT HEAD OPEN REAL GOOD.

ZURU (SHLURK)

JUST SIT STILL, OKAY?

— "GET AWAY"?

GOTTA GET AWAY...

JUST LIKE HOW THE SEA SWALLOWED UP MY FAMILY THAT DAY...

...THERE'S SOMETHING OFFERING TO TAKE MY LIFE...

WHY AM I RUNNING FROM AYAME-SAN ANYWAY?

I COULD JUST...

...LET AYAME-SAN MAKE A MEAL OUT OF ME...!

...RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.

ZA
(SLASH)

.....!!

AW...

ARE YOU OKAY THERE? IT HURTS, DOESN'T IT?

YOU ONLY HAVE YOURSELF TO BLAME... I TOLD YOU NOT TO MOVE, HINAKO-CHAN...

WHY...

...AM I TRYING TO.....?

ピク…
PIKU (JOLT)

.....?

LOOK AT THAT... YOUR BLOOD'S LEAKING OUT...

WHAT A WASTE...

ZURUN (SHLURK)

ペロ
NURU (SLURP)

THIS FLAVOR...

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...

.....?

YES, THAT EXPLAINS IT.

.....AHH, THAT MUST BE IT.

ZAAA (WHOOOSH)

HINAKO-CHAN, YOU MUST'VE...

WHAT A THING TO HAPPEN...

HAAH...

...RECEIVED BLOOD FROM THAT MERMAID, I SUPPOSE?

...HUH?

OH?

GU (CRUNCH)

ZA (FSSH)

ZA

ZA

ZA

.....HEH HEH.

ZA

ZABA (SPLOOSH)

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

...WHAT DID...

GIRI (CLAW)

...YOU DO...

...TO HER?

HEH HEH...

I'M SORRY, OKAY?

BIKI (CRACK)

WHO COULD'VE KNOWN THAT SHE...

IF I'D KNOWN FROM THE START, I NEVER WOULD'VE GONE FOR HER.

I MEANT NO OFFENSE, REALLY.

...WAS YOUR-

SHUT ...

...YOUR ...

...MOUTH.

THOSE SHARP SCALES, GLEAMING WITH A DULL LIGHT...

...AND THOSE MASSIVE, CORAL-LIKE ANTLERS—

A FAR CRY FROM THE "LITTLE MERMAID" OF MY CHILDHOOD PICTURE BOOKS.

YET I...

...FOUND IT FAMILIAR.....

I...

RIII (CROAK)

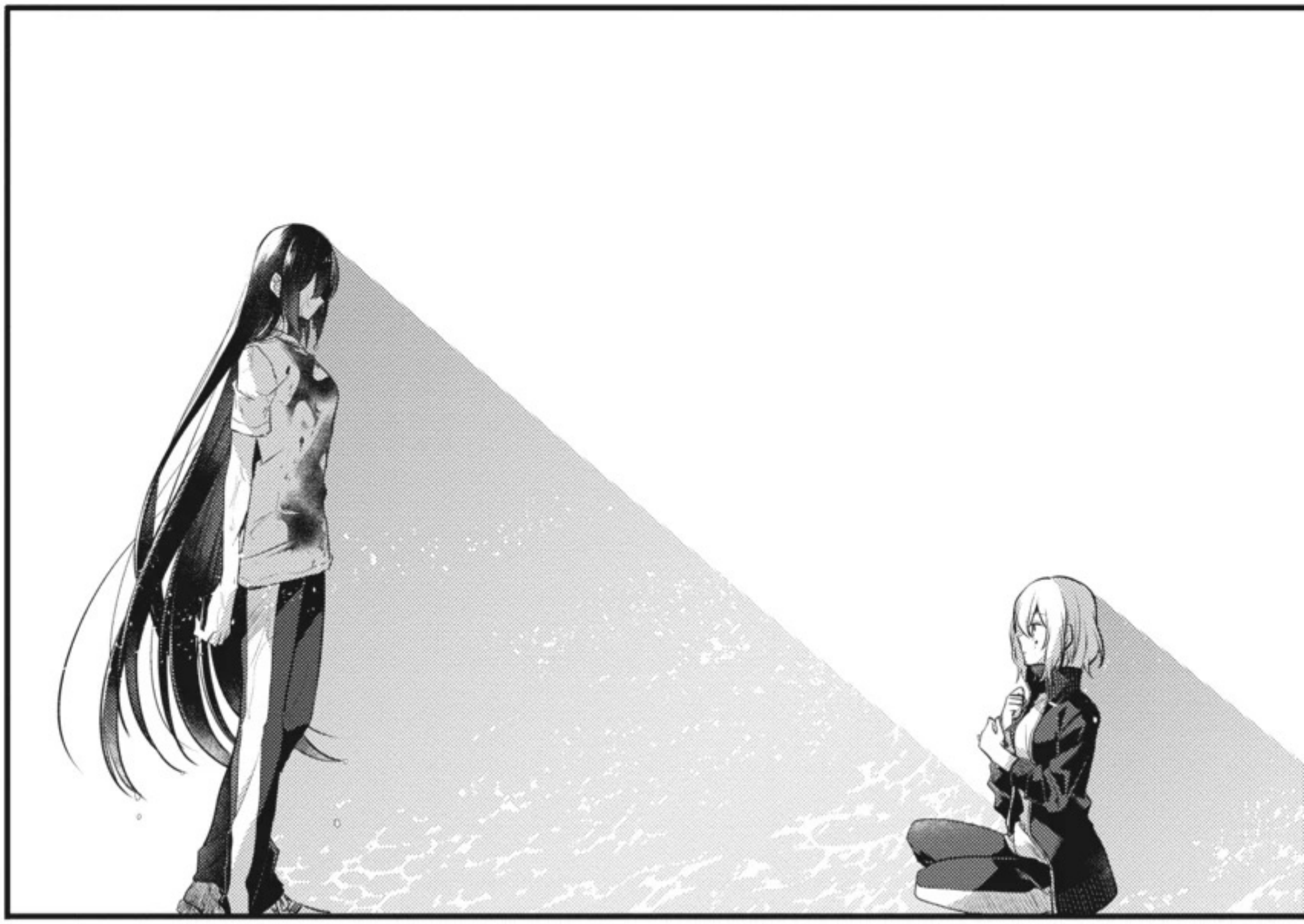
RIII

ZA

ZABU

ZABU (SQUELCH)

ZABU



ARE YOU HURT?

YOUR ARM.

SHIORI-SAN...

...IT SEEMS LIKE A SHALLOW CUT.

...I'M OKAY.

HUH ...?

KUI (TUG)

I'LL GO GET THE KITSUNE AS WELL. LET US PATCH YOU UP, OKAY?

LET'S HEAD BACK IN THROUGH THE REAR ENTRANCE.

BUT SHIORI-SAN...!

UM...

...!

BIKU (GOLD)

AND WHY DO I FEEL LIKE...

WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT...?

...WHAT AYAME-SAN SAID ABOUT MERMAID BLOOD...

YOU MUST'VE RECEIVED BLOOD FROM THAT MERMAID, I SUPPOSE?

...I'VE SEEN YOUR TRUE FORM BEFORE?

SOMEWHERE... AT SOME POINT...

To Be Continued in Volume 5

A PAIR OF HAIR CLIPS THAT RESEMBLE THE KANJI CHARACTER FOR MOUTH (口)
HUH?

SORRY TO ASK THIS OF YOU ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE!

BUT I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU BOTH COMING TO HELP!

GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM CAPTAIN

THINK NOTHING OF IT.

OH?

JUST THE SHIRT ON HER BACK

OUMI-SAN... DID YOU NOT BRING ANY LUGGAGE?

?

HAS NO CONCEPT OF "LUGGAGE"

DEAR ME...

LUGGAGE?

COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE NEVER SEEN SHIORI-SAN CARRY A BAG OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL...

NOT AT THE FESTIVAL...

NOR AT THE BEACH...

HAS PICKED UP ON THE CONCEPT

YOU TOTAL AMATEUR AT MIMICKING HUMANS!!

THE THING ABOUT SHIORI-SAN'S LUGGAGE IS.....

UMM... ERM...

?

WE LIVE NEAR EACH OTHER!!

SH-SHE PACKED HER STUFF IN MY BAG, YEAH!

'COS SHE COULDN'T FIND A BIG BAG ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE!

OHH, THAT EXPLAINS YOUR HEFTY BAG, YASHIRO-SAN.

HA-HA-HA... YEP. SURE DOES.

ずしっ

ZUSHI (FWUMP)

ACTUALLY FILLED WITH SNACKS AND BOARD GAMES

FIRST I'M HEARING.

?

IS THAT SO?

WOULD YOU SHUT UP AND PLAY ALONG?

SHARING A BAG MUST MEAN...

!!!

...THE TWO OF YOU ARE REALLY CLOSE, HUH?

NUH-UH... I WOULDN'T SAY WE GET ALONG OR...

I'D REALLY LOVE IT IF...

...YOU TWO GOT ALONG...

...ANY-THING.....

PLEASE GET ALONG...

JI (STARE)

YOU'VE SOLD YOUR SOUL.

DROP DEAD.

GYU (GLOMP)

WE'RE THE BEST OF BESTIES!

TRANSLATION NOTES

GENERAL

-san: The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.

-chan: An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals regardless of gender.

Page 165

The *two hair clips shaped like the kanji character for mouth* imply that Ayame-san is a *futakuchi onna*. Meaning "two-mouthed woman," *futakuchi onna* appear as women who eat very little—however, they possess a second mouth with a ravenous appetite hidden on the backs of their heads.

← THIS BONUS COMIC IS ABOUT THE VERY FIRST CONCEPT FOR *MONSTEAT*.

GRAAA

OOOO (DOOM)

HELP...

SOMEONE HELP ME...!!

ZA (STOMP)

EEK!

NOT SO FAST!

LISTEN UP, YOU STRAY MUTT!

DON'T YOU LAY A FINGER ON HINAKO-CHAN!

BA (BAM)

SHIORI-SAN...!!

'COS HINAKO-CHAN...

TA (TMP)

MERI (POP)

...IS...

BAKIIIN (CRACK)

...MY BRIDE!!

SWOON

SCAWWY...

SFX: GUCHA (CRUNCH), BAKI, GO (SNAP)

PERA (FLIP)

HINAKO YAOTOSE HUMAN

SCARED

HAIR HAS FAILURE UNDER-TONES

HINAKO-CHAN!?

EMOTICALLY INCLINED

WATER DRAINING FISH

CORAL-LIKE ANTLERS

SHIMMERING SHARKSKIN

MERMAID MODE

HUH?

WHAT IS THIS?

THE EARLIEST CONCEPT ART.

HUH ??

ONLY THE GROTESQUE MONSTER DESIGNS REMAIN.

ENERGETIC WISHFUL THINKER

WAAAH!

NOISY SCAREDY-CAT CRYBABY

I'M GONNA MAKE YOU MY BRIDE, ♡HINAKO-♡CHAN!

THE STORY CONCEPT WAS "LOVEY-DOVEY MEETS MONSTERS," BUT...WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND DONE, WE WOUND UP IN OUR CURRENT STATE.

THESE EARLIEST VERSIONS OF US ONLY HAD ABOUT ONE-EIGHTH OF OUR CURRENT INTELLIGENCE.

ZO (SHUDDER)

WHAT AN AWFUL CONCEPT...

...THEN WHAT WAS MIKO-CHAN LIKE ORIGINALLY?

WELL...

SHE EXPERIENCED SOME DRAMATIC CHANGES BEFORE HER VIBE WAS SOLIDIFIED.

SHE WAS MORE OF A COOL AND COLLECTED CHARACTER... BUT STILL A MONSTER POSITIONED AS YOUR GOOD FRIEND.

THE PLAN WAS TO GIVE HER A PONYTAIL + HOODIE.

I SUPPOSE SHE INITIALLY LOOKED SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

I... SOMEHOW FEEL BAD FOR HER.....

SHE ENDED UP RECEIVING THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT WERE STRIPPED FROM BOTH OF US...

FWEE-HEE!

VOLUME 4... THE COVER OF THIS ONE ENDED UP PRETTY COLORFUL, HUH...?

THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP VOLUME 4 OF MONSTEAT!

...IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE THING TO PUT RIGHT AFTER CHAPTER 18.

I HAD A BUNCH OF EXTRA PAGES TO FILL WITH BONUS CONTENT THIS TIME AROUND, SO WHY NOT INCLUDE THAT EARLIEST CONCEPT FOR THIS SERIES, I THOUGHT. THAT SAID...

THEY DID A FULL 180...

EVERYTHING WOUND UP GOING IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DIRECTION, BUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CHARACTERS DIDN'T REALLY CHANGE.

YOU SAID IT...

SHE'S S'POSED TO BE MY FRIEND...

...THIS WAS INEVITABLE...(?)

ACTUALLY, MY EDITOR FIRST REACHED OUT TO ME ABOUT A GLOOMY YURI BOOK. SO...

BY THE WAY, NAEKAWA (THE AUTHOR) IS A BIG FAN OF BOTH GRIM, GLOOMY STORIES AND STORIES ABOUT TOTAL DITZES.

MONSTEAT DEFINITELY WENT IN THE GLOOMY DIRECTION, SO I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP FOLLOWING ALONG TO SEE WHERE THINGS GO!

–Sai Naekawa

I'M ALSO CAPABLE OF CARRYING YOU LIKE A PRINCESS, YOU KNOW.

NO THANKS... I'M GOOD...

DON'T DENY YOURSELF!

SPECIAL THANKS!!

· KAMEMARU-SAN, MY EDITOR · MY DESIGNER, SALIDAS CO.'S SHOJI-SAN · EHIME PREFECTURE'S IYO AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL, FOR PROVIDING VISUAL REFERENCE FOR THE SCHOOL · SHINO-SENSEI · MY FRIENDS · MY FAMILY · YOU READERS!

This Monster Wants to Eat Me 4

Sai Naekawa

Translation:
CALEB COOK

Lettering:
BIANCA PISTILLO

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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